

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 017798 TOSEC 010209

NODIS

FOR DAY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US

SUBJECT: REVISIONS FOR MEMORANDUM TO PRESIDENT ON
STRATEGY FOR RABIN VISIT

1. FOLLOWING GIVES TEXTS AS REVISED BY SECRETARY AND NEA
OF SUBJECT MEMORANDUM.

2. REVISED PAGE 2:

-- IN THIS CONNECTION, GIVE RABIN OUR PERCEPTION OF THE
CURRENT SITUATION:

(A) OUR AGREED STRATEGY OF GETTING THROUGH 1976 ON THE
BASIS OF SINAI II REQUIRES SOME ACTIVITY IN 1976 IF SADAT'S
REALISTIC POLICIES ARE NOT TO BE UNDERMINED AND EXTREMIST
TENDENCIES STRENGTHENED. A STALEMATE WILL CONTINUE THE
UPSURGE OF PRO-PALESTINIAN SENTIMENT, AS EVERY ARAB COUNTRY
USES THE PLO AS AN ALIBI FOR A STALEMATE.

(B) ISRAEL'S PRESENT POLICIES ARE SEEN AS BLOCKING ANY
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MOVEMENT ON ANY FRONT. OFFERS SIMPLY TO NEGOTIATE WITH
HUSSEIN ARE NON-STARTERS.

(C) THERE NEEDS TO BE EITHER

--A DRAMATIC ISRAELI TERRITORIAL OFFER ON THE WEST BANK,
THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND PERHAPS THE SINAI, OR

-- A PROCEDURAL MOVE ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION THAT WILL
PERMIT THE RECONVENING OF GENEVA; WE BLOCKED THIS IN THE
SECURITY COUNCIL BUT NEED TO ADDRESS IT SERIOUSLY IN
DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS IF THE ALTERNATIVE OF A TERRITORIAL
MOVE IS BLOCKED.

-- GET ACROSS TO RABIN THAT THERE ARE STEPS WE CAN TAKE
UNILATERALLY THAT WILL AT LEAST HELP US MAINTAIN SOME
CONTROL OF EVENTS, AND WE ARE PREPARED TO TAKE THEM IF
ISRAEL WILL AGREE TO NO JOINT COURSE OF ACTION.

3. REVISED PAGE 4: II. BACKGROUND

IT HAD BEEN OUR HOPE THAT AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE SINAI
II AGREEMENT WE COULD HELP BRING SYRIA AND ISRAEL INTO
NEGOTIATION OF AN AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE GOLAN. THE
ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY SATISFIED AT LEAST
FOR THE TIME BEING WITH THE POST-SINAI II STATUS QUO, HAS
PURSUED A POLICY THAT MUST INEVITABLE LEAD TO A STALEMATE
IF IT IS CONTINUED. ISRAEL HAS HELD OUT LITTLE HOPE TO
THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS THAT ATTEMPTS TO NEGOTIATE FURTHER
ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS WOULD PRODUCE FRUITFUL RESULTS. THE
ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY, IN THE SUMMER OF 1974,
FAILED TO MAKE A TERRITORIAL OFFER TO JORDAN, FOR
WITHDRAWAL ON THE WEST BANK, SUFFICIENT TO ENABLE HUSSEIN
TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS. THE SUBSEQUENT, AND IN PART
RESULTING, ARAB DECISION TO NAME THE PLO AS REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE PALESTINIANS FOR ANY SUCH NEGOTIATIONS HAS TENDED
TO FREEZE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR POLITICAL PROGRESS ON THIS
FRONT. FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF SINAI II, THE HARD
ISRAELI POSITION CONCERNING WITHDRAWALS ON THE GOLAN HAS
SIMILARLY GIVEN THE SYRIANS NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO NEGOTIATE.
THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ARE CLOSE TO THE PRESENT LINE, AND
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ISRAELI STATEMENTS HAVE GIVEN LITTLE REASON TO BELIEVE
THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO GIVE UP ANY SETTLEMENT IN
AN INTERIM AGREEMENT. ISRAEL, MOREOVER, NEVER ADVANCED
THE UNILATERAL PROPOSAL RABIN HAD PROMISED IN JUNE.

WITH THE AVENUES FOR PROGRESS ON TERRITORIAL ISSUES CLOSED
PRIMARILY BY ISRAEL'S UNWILLINGNESS TO MOVE ON THE WEST
BANK OR GOLAN, THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE HAS EMERGED AS THE
NEW FOCAL POINT OF POLITICAL CONFRONTATION. SYRIA,
RETAINING ITS INTEREST IN A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BUT

SEEKING A MORE ADVANTAGEOUS CONTEXT FOR NEGOTIATIONS, HAS
TURNED TO BUILDING POLITICAL SUPPORT. ASAD ANNOUNCED

THAT HE WOULD NOT AGREE TO NEGOTIATE WITH ISRAEL, EITHER BILATERALLY OR IN A GENEVA CONFERENCE, UNLESS THE ISRAELIS AND PLO WOULD SIMULTANEOUSLY ENTER NEGOTIATION ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. SYRIA, AT THE SAME TIME, BITTERLY ATTACKED EGYPT FOR MAKING A SEPARATE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL THAT IN THE SYRIAN VIEW SERIOUSLY WEAKENED THE ARAB CAUSE. DAMASCUS SOUGHT WITH SOME SUCCESS TO DRAW THE ARAB WORLD TO ITS SUPPORT BOTH ON THE PLO ISSUE AND TO ISOLATE EGYPT. IT TURNED PARTICULARLY TO THE JORDANIANS, WITH WHOM IT HAD BEGUN A PROCESS OF RAPPROCHEMENT SOME MONTHS EARLIER, TO BUILD A

4. REVISED PAGE 7, SECOND FULL PARAGRAPH AND CONTINUING:

THE NET EFFECT OF ISRAELI POLICY, AND OF THE DEVELOPMENTS FOR WHICH IT HAS BEEN PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE, HAS THUS BEEN A DEEPENING STALEMATE WITH THE MOST SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. THE RIGID ISRAELI STANCE REGARDING TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS TO THE ARABS HAS FORCED THE POLITICAL FOCUS AROUND TO THE PLO, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CENTRAL POINT OF THE MIDDLE EAST DEBATE AND WHICH POSES SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. AT THE SAME TIME, ISRAEL HAS SOUGHT TO WEAKEN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES BY BRINGING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON US OVER ARAB BOYCOTT ISSUES, BY LEAKS TO THE PRESS CALCULATED TO EMBARRASS US WITH THE ARABS, ETC.--A POLICY THAT CAN ONLY HAVE THE EFFECT OF LIMITING OUR CAPACITY TO HELP BOTH SIDES IN THE SEARCH FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

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ONE MUST RECOGNIZE, OF COURSE, THAT ISRAELI UNWILLINGNESS TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE IS FOUNDED AT LEAST IN PART ON THE UNDERLYING LACK OF SYMMETRY IN ANY TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT ISRAEL MAKES. THE ISRAELIS GIVE UP LAND -- A CONCRETE AND ESSENTIALLY IRREVERSIBLE STEP-- AND GET IN RETURN ARAB POLITICAL COMMITMENTS -- LESS CONCRETE AND MORE EASILY REVERSED, PARTICULARLY IN THE EYES OF THE ISRAELIS, WHO HAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN COMMITMENTS THE ARABS MIGHT MAKE. WE REALIZED THAT WE COULD NOT EXPECT TO MAKE DECISIVE PROGRESS IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS DURING 1976, BUT WE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WAS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT SOME PROGRESS BE MADE SO THAT WE CAN PRESS FORWARD AGAIN IN 1977. IF WE DO NOT MAKE SUCH PROGRESS, AND IF THE SENSE OF MOVEMENT AND DIRECTION WE HAVE GIVEN TO MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS SINCE 1973 IS LOST, AN IRREVERSIBLE PROCESS WILL SET IN LEADING TOWARD

POLARIZATION, POLITICAL DETERIORATION IN WHICH SADAT AND OTHER ARAB MODERATES WILL BE UNDERMINED, AND ULTIMATELY RENEWED HOSTILITIES.

5. ADDITION TO END OF PAGE 9:

AND

THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE CANNOT BE REACTIVATED, AT THIS POINT, UNLESS ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO MAKE PRECISE AND SPECIFIC PROPOSALS REGARDING ITS READINESS TO WITHDRAW IN RETURN FOR APPROPRIATE POLITICAL COMMITMENTS. NOT ONLY WILL ARAB GOVERNMENTS OTHERWISE BE UNWILLING TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS, BUT THE IDEA OF HUSSEIN AS A NEGOTIATOR FOR THE WEST BANK IS A NON-STARTER WITHOUT AN ISRAELI MOVE OF THIS CHARACTER. WHAT IS NEEDED NOW, TO GIVE A WHOLE NEW AND POSITIVE CAST TO THE SITUATION, IS A SWEEPING ISRAELI PROPOSAL CONCERNING WITHDRAWALS ON THE GOLAN, THE WEST BANK AND PERHAPS THE SINAI IN EXCHANGE FOR AN ARAB COMMITMENT OF NON-BELLIGERENCY.

6. ADDITION TO PAGE TEN AFTER FIRST PARAGRAPH:

RABIN'S PRESENT POSTURE IS PROBABLY AFFECTED BY HIS EXPERIENCES IN 1970-1971 AS A CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE CONDUCT
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OF U.S. - ISRAELI RELATIONS. RABIN'S PERCEPTION OF ISRAELI POLICY IN THAT PERIOD MAY WELL BE ONE OF ISRAELI SUCCESS IN (A) STANDING FIRM IN THE FACE OF U.S. URGINGS FOR ISRAELI MOVEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMATIC FRONT AND (B) EXTRACTING U.S. CONCESSIONS IN THE ARMS SUPPLY SPHERE IN RETURN FOR ISRAELI AGREEMENT TO TAKE PART IN MIDDLE EAST PEACE DISCUSSIONS--DISCUSSIONS FOR WHICH ISRAEL HAD HAD TO MAKE NO ADVANCE PROMISES TO THE U.S. OF GREATER ISRAELI NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY.

AFTER HAVING BEEN TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THE U.S. INITIATIVE IN JUNE 1970 TO BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE ALONG THE SUEZ CANAL AND A RENEWAL OF THE JARRING TALKS, ISRAEL WAS ABLE TO GET U.S. ASSURANCES OF SUPPORT BEFORE FINALLY ACCEPTING THE U.S. INITIATIVE AT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST. WHEN THE SOVIETS AND EGYPTIANS VIOLATED THE STANDSTILL FEATURES OF THE CEASEFIRE FROM THE MOMENT IT ENTERED INTO EFFECT IN AUGUST, ISRAEL WON FULL U.S. BACKING FOR ITS PROMPT WITHDRAWAL FROM THE JARRING TALKS IN RETALIATION AND THEN IN LATE 1970 OBTAINED FURTHER U.S. ARMS SUPPLY COMMITMENTS AS THE PRICE FOR ISRAEL'S RETURN TO THE JARRING TALKS IN JANUARY 1971. ISRAEL WAS ABLE TO ABORT THOSE TALKS WHEN JARRING TOOK HIS OWN PREMATURE INITIATIVE IN FEBRUARY 1971 AT NO COST TO THE ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1971, WHEN THE ISRAELIS PERCEIVED U.S. ALOOFNESS TOWARD DISCUSSING A NEW PHANTOM-

AIRCRAFT SUPPLY CONTRACT AS AN ATTEMPT TO GET ISRAEL TO ENTER INTO PROXIMITY TALKS WITH EGYPT ON A LIMITED SUEZ CANAL AGREEMENT, ISRAEL STONEWALLED THE IDEA OF SUCH TALKS FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR. THEN IN DECEMBER MRS. MEIR CAME TO WASHINGTON AND OBTAINED THE PHANTOM

CONTRACT WITHOUT MAKING ANY CONCESSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY FRONT, BY WHICH TIME SADAT WAS NO LONGER IN A POSITION POLITICALLY TO ENTER INTO PROXIMITY TALKS, AND THE PERIOD OF MIDDLE EAST STAGNATION AND DRIFT SET IN WHICH WAS TERMINATED ONLY BY THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR.

7. REVISED PAGE 22, FINAL PARAGRAPH AND CONTINUATION OF PARAGRAPH TO PAGE 23:

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THE TERRITORIAL OPTION COULD INVOLVE THE GOLAN--WITH SYRIA -- THE WEST BANK -- WITH JORDAN -- OR, IN COMBINATION WITH EITHER OR BOTH, THE SINAI -- WITH EGYPT. THE TERRITORIAL ASPECTS OF THIS OPTION AMOUNT TO AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: WHAT IS ISRAEL WILLING TO GIVE FOR NON-BELLIGERENCY?

8. REVISED PAGE 24, FIRST PARAGRAPH AND NEW SECOND PARAGRAPH:

TALKS UNLESS HE RECEIVED PERMISSION FROM THESE OTHER GOVERNMENTS. FOR RABIN, TO GIVE HUSSEIN ENOUGH TO WORK WITH IS EVEN MORE OF A PROBLEM THAN A MAJOR GOLAN INITIATIVE, SINCE HE HAS PROMISED TO CALL NATIONAL ELECTIONS BEFORE ANY COMMITMENT IS MADE TO GIVE UP ANY PART OF THE WEST BANK.

A FURTHER SINAI WITHDRAWAL WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE A VIABLE OPTION UNACCOMPANIED BY MOVEMENT ON ONE OF THE OTHER FRONTS, GIVEN THE VIOLENT OPPOSITION SADAT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY ENCOUNTER FROM THE ENTIRE ARAB WORLD (WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR HIS SAUDI AID) IF HE MOVED ALONE.

9. REVISED PAGE 27:

IV. YOUR TALKING POINTS

-- SINCE WE LAST MET IN JUNE OF 1975 THE U.S. HAS HELPED YOU AND EGYPT CONCLUDE THE SINAI II AGREEMENT. THIS WAS A STEP THAT GAVE US MUCH HOPE FOR FURTHER PROGRESS. I AM SORRY TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THESE HOPES ARE UNREALIZED AND THAT, TO THE CONTRARY, I SEE THE MIDDLE EAST ON THE VERGE OF A STALEMATE AND A POLITICAL

DETERIORATION IN THE ARAB WORLD THAT WILL BE IRREVERSIBLE EXCEPT BY WAR.

-- IT SEEMS CLEAR TO ME ISRAEL'S RIGIDITY, NOW THAT SINAI II IS IN BEING, IS THE MAJOR FACTOR IN THIS. I WANT TO SAY THIS FRANKLY AT THE OUTSET OF OUR TALKS. ISRAELI POLICY IS LEADING BOTH OUR COUNTRIES INTO A SITUATION

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THAT WILL HAVE THE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR BOTH
OF US. I WANT ALSO TO SAY, AT THE OUTSET, HOW MUCH I
DEPLORE THE WAY IN WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS CONDUCTED
ITS RELATIONS WITH US IN THE MONTHS SINCE THE SINAI
AGREEMENT WAS CONCLUDED.

-- LEAKS TO THE PRESS THAT EMBARRASS US AND EMBARRASS
THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS, PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY YOU AND YOUR
MINISTERS THAT CONVEY A PROFOUNDLY NEGATIVE IMPRESSION
ABOUT THE CHANCES OF YOUR AGREEING TO REASONABLE
SETTLEMENT TERMS, IRRESPONSIBLE AND INFLAMMATORY ACTIONS
SUCH AS THE RAID ON LEBANON AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
FURTHER SETTLEMENTS ON THE GOLAN, ALL RAISE IN MY MIND
AND SURELY MUST RAISE IN THE MINDS OF OTHERS THE QUESTION
WHETHER ISRAEL DOES GENUINELY DESIRE PEACE. I WOULD
FIND THIS CONDUCT UNACCEPTABLE IN GOVERNMENTS WITH WHICH
SISCO

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